



EXCISE

Department of State

TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

AM: 0760231-0056

PAGE 01 BUENOS 03960 151703Z

53

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SY-05 SCCT-01 ORM-02 DHA-02

ARAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 /074 W

082426

O R 151620Z JUN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6026

INFO USUN NY 631

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L UENOS AIRES 3960

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, SREF, PINS, AR, CI, UR

SUBJECT: AFTERMATH OF KIDNAPPING OF REFUGEES IN BUENOS AIRES

REF: A) BUENOS AIRES 3918, B) BUENOS AIRES 3914, C) BUENOS AIRES 3880

1. SUMMARY. TWENTY-FOUR FOREIGN REFUGEES, MOSTLY CHILEANS, UNDER UNHCR PROTECTION WERE KIDNAPPED BY BAND OF UNIDENTIFIED ARMED MEN IN BUENOS AIRES JUNE 11. ALL WERE RELEASED JUNE 12 SUFFERING FROM BEATINGS AND ELECTRIC TORTURE, UNDER THREAT OF DEATH IF THEY DID NOT LEAVE ARGENTINA WITHIN 48 HOURS (SEE REF A). UNHCR IS NOW SEARCHING FOR COUNTRIES TO GIVE VISAS TO THOSE THREATENED. GOA HAS MADE NO PUBLIC STATEMENT ON INCIDENT, BUT IS PLACED IN EMBARRASSING POSITION DUE OFFICIAL STATEMENT SHORTLY BEFORE KIDNAPPINGS THAT "REFUGEES IN NO SPECIFIC DANGER" (SEE REF B). GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES THIS AND EARLIER REFUGEE INCIDENTS, CONCLUSION ALMOST INESCAPABLE THAT GOA SECURITY FORCES EITHER DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE OR AT
PAGE 02 BUENOS 03960 151703Z

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY: *J. Siebke*

DATE

4/20/82

PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

LEAST TOLERATING EXTRA-OFFICIAL ACTIONS. EMBASSY SUGGESTS DEPARTMENT RAISE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE WITH MARTINEZ DE HOZ IN WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.

2. THE WEEKEND KIDNAPPING AND TORTURE OF 24 FOREIGN REFUGEES FOLLOWING THEFT OF REFUGEE DOCUMENTS FROM CATHOLIC COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION JUNE 9 (REF C) HAS REPORTEDLY SPREAD TERROR AMONG THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES IN ARGENTINA. IT HAS ALSO EMBARRASSED THE NOW SILENT GOA, WHICH INSISTED LAST FRIDAY, JUNE 11, THAT FOREIGN REFUGEES HAD NO "SPECIFIC DANGER" TO FEAR IN ARGENTINA, TWENTY-FOUR REFUGEES IN BUENOS AIRES UNDER UNHCR PROTECTION--23 CHILEAN, ONE URUGUAYAN-- AND THE PARAGUAYAN HOTEL CLERK WERE KIDNAPPED, BEATEN, TORTURED AND FREED JUNE 11-12 AND WARNED TO "LEAVE ARGENTINA WITHIN 48 HOURS OR BE KILLED." UNHCR OFFICIALS ARE FRANTICALLY SEEKING FOREIGN COUNTRIES IN WHICH TO RELOCATE THE THREATENED REFUGEES, BUT AS OF JUNE 14 HAD ONLY SECURED TWO PLACES IN NETHERLANDS, TWO IN CANADA AND UP TO FIVE IN SWEDEN. (UNHCR REP TOLD EMOFFS JUNE 14 THAT UNHCR/GENEVA WAS ASKED TO REQUEST ASYLUM IN THE US FOR REFUGEES ENDANGERED IN ARGENTINA.)

3. ACCORDING TO UNHCR REP, THE REFUGEES REPORTED THEY WERE INTERROGATED BY MAN THEY RECOGNIZED AS SECURITY OFFICERS FROM CHILE AND URUGUAY WHO HAD DOSSIERS ON EACH REFUGEE. WHILE UNDERGOING BEATINGS, ELECTRIC TORTURE AND RECORDED MUSIC AND SCREAMS, THE CHILEAN REFUGEES WERE QUESTIONED BY CHILEAN SECURITY OFFICERS AND THE ONE URUGUAYAN BY URUGUAYAN OFFICIAL WHOM THEY INSISTED THEY RECOGNIZED, THE UNHCR REP SAID. INTERROGATING TEAMS HAD RECORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE REFUGEES, APPARENTLY FROM THE DOCUMENTS STOLEN FROM THE CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION COMMISSION AND FILES FROM THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, ACCORDING TO UNHCR REP WHO SPENT MOST OF THE WEEKEND WITH THE TERRORIZED REFUGEES. VICTIMS WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR OWN ACTIVITIES AND ABOUT THE UNHCR AND TOLD TO LEAVE ARGENTINA WITHIN 48 HOURS OR BE KILLED. THEY TOLD UNHCR REP THAT THEY WERE BROUGHT TO OLD BUILDING THAT WAS WELL EQUIPPED WITH "TORTURE APPARATUS."

4. THE KIDNAPPINGS WERE VERY QUIETLY PLAYED IN ALL BUENOS AIRES PRESS EXCEPT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BA HERALD, WHICH RAN WEEKEND PAGE ONE STORIES, A SUNDAY FEATURE DESCRIBING THE

PAGE 03 BUENOS 03960 151703Z

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

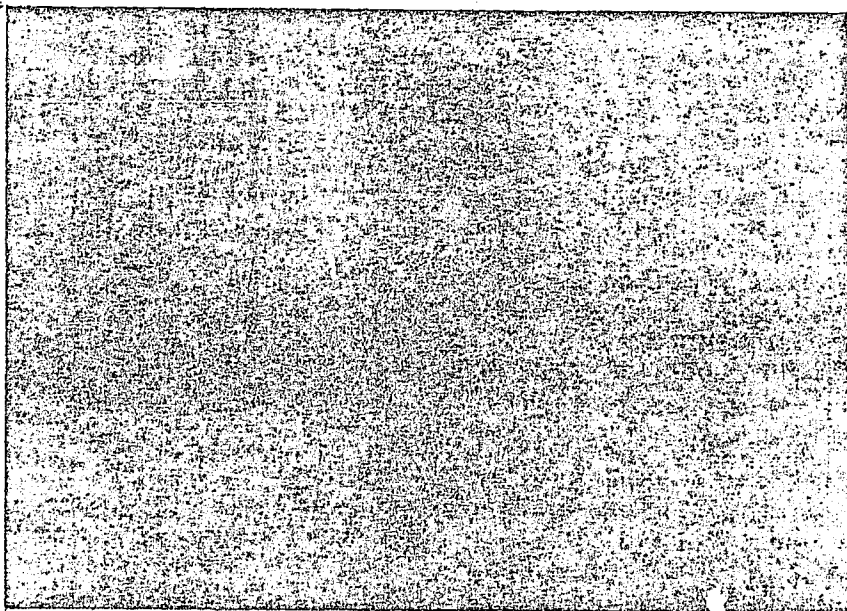
EXCISE

CONFIDENTIAL

KIDNAPPINGS UNDER HEADING, "AN ILL WIND BLOWS," AND A MONDAY MORNING EDITORIAL IMPLOING GOVT TO STOP UNEXPLAINED VIGILANTE-TYPE KIDNAPPINGS WHICH ARE UNDERMINING ITS IMAGE ABROAD.

5. THERE ARE CURRENTLY 2000 REFUGEES UNDER UNHCR PROTECTION HOUSED IN 14 HOTELS IN BUENOS AIRES, ANOTHER 2000 IN MENDOZA AND MORE IN OTHER PROVINCIAL ARGENTINE CITIES. UNHCR IN ARGENTINA AND GENEVA IS APPEALING DIRECTLY TO MORE THAN 20 COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE SAFE HAVEN FOR THOSE THREATENED. (UNHCR REP WOULD WELCOME AN EXTENSION OF CHILEAN PAROLE PROGRAM OR OTHER US ASSISTANCE ON BEHALF OF THE REFUGEES. HE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT NONE OF THE 25 THREATENED WERE "ECONOMIC REFUGEES" OR HIGHLY POLITICIZED; PERHAPS FIVE OR MORE WERE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY.)

6. ON JUNE 14 CALL ON HIGH FONMIN OFFICIAL, CHARGE DISCUSSED HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ARGENTINA (SEPTTEL).



B, ED

PAGE 04 BUENOS 03960 151703Z

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

EXCISE

CONFIDENTIAL

8. CATHOLIC BISHOPS SENT A STRONG STATEMENT ON REFUGEE
INCIDENT TO GOA, WHICH HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICLY RELEASED,
ACCORDING TO UNHCR REP.

B1, E1

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED